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ODD OLD CUSTOMS.

Not so very long ago the bridegroom in a Hungarian peasant wedding gave the bride a kick as a part of the ceremony, thus symbolizing her future subjection.

The lord of the manor of Oakham, England, can demand from every peer passing through his realm the near fore shoe of his horse. Even royalty is not exempt, though ornamental shoes are now used instead of real ones.

The "just saved his bacon" is an expression arising out of the curious old custom of "the Dunmow flitch," awarded annually to a couple willing to go on their knees on two sharp-pointed stones and swear that they haven't quarreled for a year and a day after their marriage.

In the old town of Bristol, E. I., Guy Fawkes Day is still celebrated with the customary English bonfires by Yankee boys who can have no idea of the reason of the celebration. Some have claimed that the election bonfire custom grew out of Guy Fawkes Day elsewhere in this country.

The Bicycle in the Zodiac.

The next time the signs of the zodiac are revised room should be made among them for the bicycle. As they stand they are out of date. The bicycle has come to be about the most conspicuous and omnipresent vernal emblem, and it is more conspicuous and more omnipresent this year than ever before. Hordes of new adventurers—women adventurers in particular—have learned to ride it during the winter that is past, and are ready to seize upon the earliest days of warmth and sunshine to explore the parks and country roads. Since bicycling began an appalling amount of new knowledge has become necessary for the successful guidance of a family. One must know which bicycle is the best; what is the lowest sum it can be bought for; what sum any given second-hand bicycle is really worth; whether last year's machine will do for another season; and so on indefinitely. Briefly, the active participant in contemporary life must know bicycles, and if he is the father of a family his knowledge must be co-extensive with his parental responsibilities.

The peculiarity about bicycles which is most impressive, and also most afflicting, is that every bicyclist yearns to start the season with a brand new machine of the newest make. There is such a thing as being satisfied with last year's horse, and even preferring him to an untried quadruped, but improvements in bicycles are devised so much more rapidly than improvements in horses that bicycles get out of date much sooner. And then, too, when you buy a new bicycle you can know pretty definitely what you are getting, and when you buy a new horse "of course you can't."

For Hypnotic Criminals.

A good story is told of a Judge who lately had the hypnotic plea raised before him by a burglar. The prisoner claimed that he did not know that he was "burgling;" that he did it automatically and unconsciously, under the direction of a hypnotist. The Judge said that he would give him the full benefit of the law and also of his hypnotic misfortune. He thereupon sentenced the man to ten years in State prison, but told him he could, if he chose, send for the hypnotist and have himself made unconscious for the entire term of his imprisonment.

"The same power," said the Judge, "which enabled you to commit burglary, and not know it, ought also to enable you to suffer imprisonment, with hard labor, and not be aware of it. At any rate, this is the best I can do for you."

Last English Decapitation.

The last occasion of decapitation for high treason in England was, I fancy, that of Thistlewood and his four companions for the Cato street conspiracy. I take the following from Thornbury's "Old Stories Retold":

"Exactly a quarter of an hour after the last man was hung the order was given to cut the bodies down. The heads were then haggled off with brutal clumsiness with a surgeon's knife. The mob expressed loudly their horror and disgust, more especially when the turnkey who exhibited the heads dropped that of Brut. 'Hallo, butter fingers!' shouted a rough voice from the rolling crowd below. 'The day had gone by for such useless brutality.' This horrible scene was enacted on May 1, 1820.

Composer and Organ Grinder.

Mascagni, the Italian composer, recently had an experience with an organ grinder who was playing the intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana" under his window at so rapid a pace that the writer of the music was driven frantic. Rushing into the street, Mascagni seized the handle of the instrument and turned it at the proper tempo, explaining to the astonished grinder that he was the famous composer and ought know how to render his own work. The next morning the organ grinder appeared with a huge placard on his back inscribed: "Pupil of the celebrated Mascagni."

Good for Cellulose.

The president of a Philadelphia company which manufactures cellulose received a cablegram from Paris announcing that news had been received there that in the battle of the Yalu the Japanese battleship Matsushima was pierced by a 6 inch shot, but the ship suffered but slight damage because of the cellulose in her cofferdams quickly expanding, closing the breach. This is the first time that cellulose has been tested in a naval battle.

At the Bishop's palace in Fulham, England, the servants are still awakened in the morning by rapping at their windows with a long pole.